

Court Farm Primary School

Tedbury Crescent, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 5NS

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Inadequate | 4 |
| Leadership and management | | Inadequate | 4 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Inadequate | 4 |
| Quality of teaching | | Inadequate | 4 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Inadequate | 4 |
| Early years provision | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils, including the most able. Until very recently, teaching failed to build on what pupils know, understand and can do.
- Marking of pupils' work does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Teachers do not routinely check that pupils act on this advice and that they understand what they have been taught.
- School leaders and governors have not been rigorous in checking that planned improvements have resulted in better teaching and achievement.
- Leaders do not review the progress of pupils regularly enough. This prevents them taking action more quickly when progress is not as good as it should be.
- Behaviour and safety are inadequate. There are incidents of bullying that some pupils and parents have concerns about. In lessons, especially when teaching does not interest them, some pupils are inattentive. Consequently, they make slow progress and distract their classmates.
- Pupils do not take enough care over the presentation of their written work.
- Although children make better progress in the early years than in Key Stages 1 and 2, they still do not make as much progress as they should in all areas of learning.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders are better held to account by governors, who now have clearly identified roles and responsibilities.
- The school promotes British values well through its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited nine lessons covering all year groups. Five of these were observed with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to them read, both within lessons and separately.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, staff and a National Leader of Education who is working with the school on behalf of the local authority.
- The 25 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were taken into account, and inspectors referred to recent parent survey information from the school. They also spoke with some parents.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by 32 members of the school staff were considered.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, looking at a range of documentation. This included an examination of work in pupils' books.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Millward

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Court Farm is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years provision is made up of one full-time Reception class.
- Just under half of the pupils are White British. Other pupils are mostly of Black or Black British heritage.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is close to the national average.
- There have been significant changes in staffing, with nine new teachers at the school since the last inspection. Recent changes include the appointment of two newly qualified teachers.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed following an external review.
- A National Leader of Education, from the Learning Trust for Excellence in Birmingham, has recently been commissioned to work with the school.
- The school manages a before- and after-school childcare facility.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make faster progress and their attainment rises, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use marking to identify misconceptions, give pupils clear guidance so that they know what to do to improve, check that pupils act on this advice and confirm that pupils are secure in their understanding
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics, and set demanding work for all pupils
 - all adults routinely check that pupils present their writing to a high standard.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders at all levels:
 - rigorously and more frequently check and evaluate how well pupils are progressing and use the information to produce sharply focused plans to improve teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment
 - work with all teachers to ensure that they know how to improve their performance and keep detailed records which show how well they are improving so that governors are better able to hold leaders and teachers to account
 - develop an effective wider leadership team by developing teachers to lead specific aspects of school improvement work.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
 - ensuring that all lessons contain sufficient challenge to maintain the concentration of all pupils and avoid some pupils causing distraction to the learning of others
 - improving communications with parents and, where necessary, external agencies to help eliminate bullying within the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Until very recently, school leaders did not use information about pupils' performance to predict likely outcomes by the end of Year 6. Pupils' rates of progress were not checked regularly enough to see how well they were progressing towards the targets that had been set for them. As a consequence, actual outcomes were often well below those expected by leaders and staff.
- Leaders did not check rigorously or regularly that the improvement strategies they had put in place were improving teaching. As a result, leaders were unable to ensure consistently good teaching across the school and this resulted in slow progress for all groups of pupils. Similarly, the work of leaders to tackle bullying is yet to result in parents and pupils having confidence that the school deals with it effectively.
- The way the school manages the performance of teachers does not accurately identify what teachers need to do in order for their teaching to become at least good. A new computer system has recently been purchased which can support the school in this work. Leaders and teachers are not yet competent in using the system. Leaders are only just beginning to establish the link between teaching performance and pay progression.
- Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.
- Improvements have been made over the past year, with significant changes in the teaching and leadership teams. Work is under way to support staff as they adopt new leadership roles, although senior leaders have not made sufficient time available for new leaders to ascertain what they need to do to ensure that standards rise quickly. Leadership of the early years provision has been improved.
- The many changes to the way subjects are taught have not been rigorously evaluated. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are working with local schools to develop their new curriculum and preferred methods for assessing pupils' progress. It is not yet clear what these will look like.
- Leaders ensure that school staff prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils are taught about democracy and the importance of rules and laws. The curriculum promotes tolerance of, and respect for, people of all faiths and those of no faith.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support from teaching assistants, to increase the hours of the senior learning mentor, to purchase English and mathematics resources and to fund educational visits. School leaders are able to demonstrate that this funding is having a positive impact in accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils, although their attainment is still a long way behind pupils nationally.
- The recent support from the local authority has resulted in some improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' rates of progress.
- The leader who has responsibility for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not a permanent member of the school staff. She carries out her role conscientiously and is aware of pupils' specific learning needs and the support that is in place to support them. However, senior leaders were not able to evaluate or provide evidence of the impact of support for this group of pupils.
- Most aspects of pupils' moral, social and cultural development are well supported by the school. In every year group, relationships are good and new pupils are supported effectively when they first arrive in the school. Pupils are respectful and show good manners. British values are well promoted, and significant events, such as Remembrance Day, are acknowledged. Pupils' spiritual development is less well developed, with little evidence seen of work about other faiths. In lessons, pupils are given little encouragement to express opinions and develop their ideas further.

■ The school has made use of primary school physical education and sport funding to provide all pupils with opportunities to participate in a wider range of activities and to employ specialist sports coaches to deliver high-quality sessions. The school has not measured the impact of the extra funding on pupils' participation in sport or their health, but parents confirm that their children enjoy the increased range of sports options available to them.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have not analysed information about pupils' progress rigorously enough to enable them to challenge leaders and staff. The effectiveness of the governing body has recently improved, following a review of governance and the subsequent change in leadership. The governing body has been restructured and is currently evaluating the effectiveness of its committee structure and delegation of specific roles; for example, linking governors to particular subjects. Governors now better understand their roles and they have begun to challenge the improved information they receive more robustly, including that regarding pupils' progress. However, detail of pupils' progress is not provided often enough by school leaders to enable governors to know whether or not pupils are making acceptable progress.
- Governors are gaining a better understanding of how well teachers are performing. They know that weaker teaching is now being addressed. Governors are just beginning to use this knowledge of performance to make decisions about teachers' pay progression.
- Governors know how extra funding is used but have not checked rigorously on its impact.
- The governing body ensures that statutory duties are met, including those relating to pupils' safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Pupils do not always display positive attitudes to their learning. Where activities are challenging, pupils' attitudes are positive and they pay good attention. Where tasks are too easy, pupils lose concentration and sometimes misbehave.
- Some pupils report examples of bullying which they feel the school does not always deal with effectively. Although leaders can point to the work they have done to tackle bullying, pupils say that bullying persists. Parents, too, express concerns about bullying.
- Pupils generally behave well at lunchtimes, playtimes and in the childcare facility. They move sensibly around the school. Pupils get on well with each other, and older pupils say that behaviour has improved.
- Pupils work and play well together. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and are happy to talk about issues involving making the right choices. When pupils display positive attitudes in their learning, these contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Such attitudes are more frequently seen in the Reception Year.
- The school's values are promoted through displays and are reflected in pupils' attitudes and the views they express. Pupils confirm that discriminatory or derogatory language is heard only on very rare occasions. Pupils talk about tolerance and understanding, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors are better equipped to evaluate how well the school deals with poor behaviour. They visit the school more regularly and know what to look for and which documents to refer to.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding procedures have improved over the last year. Staff have the required training, and checks are made by leaders that school policies are implemented consistently. The school is rigorous in ensuring that all staff, including those working with pupils outside of the school day, have been vetted. Risk assessments ensure pupils are safe, both in school and on educational visits.

- Pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They understand what bullying is, and the different forms it can take.
- Attendance is improving but remains below the national average. Staff are increasingly challenging parents about the reasons given for pupils' absence. Actions designed to improve punctuality at the start of the school day are yet to show impact.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Prior to this year, teachers did not reflect on what pupils can do in order to plan and teach activities that effectively challenged all ability groups. As a result, the work given to pupils, including the most able, was often too easy. For example, in writing, pupils were not expected to use grammar and punctuation to a standard that reflected their current level of performance. Teaching has improved this year but teachers are not doing enough to help pupils catch up on previously lost ground.
- While marking is kept up to date, teachers do not always identify in their marking the most important reasons why pupils are not succeeding in a given task. As a result, pupils are not challenged to make greater progress or deepen their understanding. In mathematics, pupils sometimes repeat calculation work they have already mastered instead of deepening their knowledge by applying such skills to unfamiliar problems.
- When misconceptions are identified, teachers do not always check on new work to ensure that pupils have become secure in their understanding. Where this does occur, progress is more rapid.
- Teachers' expectations for how pupils present their writing are not high enough. Pupils do not take care with their writing, both in terms of their handwriting and in their accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. This leads to pupils failing to consolidate key writing skills. Marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve their writing.
- Marking and feedback to pupils have improved in mathematics. Teachers are now working with pupils to secure better progress in this subject. For example, there are clear written comments from adults and responses from pupils in Year 4 that demonstrate pupils are more confident in their calculation work. However, such impact is not seen in all year groups. Further, occasionally pupils' errors are missed and, worse still, incorrect feedback given.
- The effectiveness of teaching assistants varies between classrooms. In some lessons, assistants do not seek out and support pupils when they are struggling. This leads to pupils becoming confused in their work. Where support is more effective, teaching assistants respond to pupils' work with questioning which probes the pupils' understanding and challenges them further.
- The teaching of early reading is effective. Children in the Reception class make good progress in their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make). However, subsequent teaching does not help pupils to read more fluently and with greater understanding. This means pupils make slow progress in reading through to the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The school has responded to parental views about homework. As a result, weekly work is provided and pupils have time in the school day to complete it if they are unable to do so at home. The work generally lacks challenge, however, and there is insufficient feedback given to the pupils about how to make improvements.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement over time has been inadequate, with progress varying throughout the school. Very little data are available about progress in the early years, progress in Key Stage 1 has been slower than expected and progress in Key Stage 2 has been inadequate.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average and, at the end of Key Stage 2, is very low. In 2014, pupils left the school at the end of Year 6 the equivalent of more than five terms behind pupils nationally. Despite improvements, current rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are not fast enough.
- In 2014, the Year 6 test results showed that disadvantaged pupils were approximately six months behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics, and a year behind in grammar, punctuation and spelling. When compared with pupils nationally, they were approximately two years behind in all aspects of English and mathematics. When compared with their classmates, the attainment gaps are closing, particularly in mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- School leaders do not know how much progress disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are expected to make over a set period of time. This makes it difficult for the school to evaluate the effectiveness of its work.
- The most-able pupils do not make fast enough progress. The work in pupils' books shows that, in mathematics, some of the most-able pupils are not set work that provides sufficient challenge and, in writing, there are not enough opportunities for them to tackle longer and more complex pieces of work.
- In 2013 and 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the national phonics check for Year 1 pupils was above average. However, pupils are not helped sufficiently to build on this early success because they are not given enough support in developing their reading in later years.
- Teachers do not insist that pupils use their skills, especially in grammar, punctuation and spelling, in all writing activities.
- Pupils currently make better progress in mathematics than in other subjects. However, work is still not challenging enough for pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children joining the school in Reception have skills that are below those typical for their age. This has been the case for many years. Children currently make at least expected progress through to the end of the Reception Year. The school is unable to provide evidence of progress in previous years.
- Staff have previously not been rigorous in ensuring that they understand what skills children need to master and then teach accordingly. This has improved. Staff are now better at quickly and accurately assessing children when they arrive in the Reception class.
- The effectiveness of provision for different groups of pupils varies. For example, children learning English as an additional language do not always make fast enough progress to catch up with their classmates.
- Better leadership is now bringing about improvement in the early years provision. The leader has a good knowledge of children's specific learning needs, and support staff are skilled in finding what our children know and can do already. More children than in the past leave the Reception Year with a good level of development. However, the school is aware that this should be even higher.
- Children are well cared for and kept safe at all times. They are curious and keen to learn. Their behaviour is typically good. They learn their daily routines well and listen carefully to guidance about their learning. Parents are pleased with the early years provision, valuing the communication with staff.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. Children settle quickly, are well supported by staff, and work and play together well. Staff are skilled in developing the children's interests.
- Children are well prepared for certain aspects of the Year 1 curriculum. Children are secure in their knowledge of phonics, whereas their writing skills are not developed to the same extent.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------|---------|----------------------|--|
| | Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| | Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 103267 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 453761 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 205 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sam Miller |
| Headteacher | Madeleine Bromley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 February 2013 |
| Telephone number | 0121 464 1038 |
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